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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

APP 1354
11

April 25, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The President
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 10-5-77, NSC 1-15-79
By ing, Date 10-2-79

Re: The Impending Crisis in the Congo and the Need
for Continuing Liaison with Tshombe

Dear Mr. President:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a recent development relating to the Congo situation which I find highly disturbing.

During the week of April 6, I made a hasty visit to Germany on Judiciary Committee business. While I was there, it occurred to me that it might prove useful if I hopped over to London to meet with President Tshombe, who was then in Britain for a round of lectures and personal meetings. I knew that President Kennedy and the Department of State had found my relationship with Tshombe very useful on several previous occasions; and I felt that it could do no harm and might do much good if I met with Tshombe, privately and confidentially, for the purpose of learning more about his plans and his thinking.

Because I did not want to take this action without the sanction of the Department, I asked Ambassador McGhee (who, incidentally, saw much merit in my proposal) to get the Department's reaction to my meeting with Tshombe. The reply came back the following morning: the Department, for reasons which it did not state, was opposed to my seeing Tshombe in London.

The termination of the U.N. military presence in the Congo some six weeks hence is bound to produce a crisis of the first magnitude in Congolese affairs. In anticipation of this crisis, I consider it important that we endow our position with as much flexibility as possible. In particular, I consider it important that some kind of liaison be maintained with former President Tshombe, because, as I see

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it, there can be no stable central government without his participation.

Our Belgian friends have shown themselves realistic enough to accept the wisdom of this position. Only several months ago Spaak gave Tshombe a visa to visit Belgium and met with him personally, despite the protests of Adoula. Our British friends have shown a similarly realistic attitude. Tshombe was permitted to visit Britain, and while he was there he addressed the members of the house of Lords and another important audience at Chatham House.

But for some reason which defies my understanding, the Department of State still continues to be governed by the ancient, discredited policy of prohibiting all personal contact with Tshombe. This policy in the past deprived them of any leverage or any ability to conciliate in the Congo crisis. The result was that, in some half dozen critical situations, when President Kennedy and the Department desired to communicate with Tshombe, they were obliged to ask me to serve as an intermediary. Thus, when U Thant announced his plan of national conciliation for the Congo, President Kennedy asked me to communicate with Tshombe, urging his acceptance.

In early March, before he took off for the Congo, Undersecretary Harriman came around to see me to discuss the Congo situation. He asked me whether I had maintained personal contact with Tshombe. I replied that I had exchanged a few simple friendly letters with Tshombe. Mr. Harriman then told me that the Department might perhaps have to call on me again to act as an intermediary with Tshombe. I replied that I would be happy to do what I could to be helpful.

But the Department cannot have its cake and eat it. If it thinks that my personal friendship with Tshombe may conceivably be of some use in the future, then I think it is silly to prohibit my meeting with him. If on the other hand, it is opposed to any personal contact with Tshombe, I do not see how the Department can reasonably expect me to intercede on its behalf if intercession becomes necessary.

In closing, Mr President, I want to assure you that I shall do everything in my power to be helpful in this situation.

Sincerely,



THOMAS J. DODD

cc: The Honorable Dean Rusk
The Honorable Averell W. Harriman

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

July 7, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

SANITIZED

Authority date 10-5-77 NSC 1-15-79
By isaf, Date 10-2-79

Dear Mr. President:

I consider it imperative that we move immediately to establish a friendly relationship with Tshombe (1) because he is by far the ablest man available to our side in the Congo, (2) because the chances are that, with our support or over our opposition, Tshombe will in the very near future emerge as Prime Minister of the Congo.

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that elements in the Department of State whose personal reputations are involved in the U.N. Congo policy disaster are still doing their utmost to undermine Tshombe and to prevent the emergence of a government under his leadership. Tshombe is aware of this and, according to reliable information, is bitter about it, and the Belgian press has been discussing the situation openly.

Our British, French, and Belgian allies moved to re-establish relations with Tshombe many months ago because they realized that he would probably again emerge as a major force in Congolese politics. He has been received by Foreign Minister Spaak in Belgium, by French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, and by top people in the British Foreign Office. While in Britain, he addressed the House of Lords, and he also addressed a large bi-partisan audience at Chatham House, with Kenneth Younger of the Labor Party in the Chair. But the State Department attitude has remained adamantly anti-Tshombe. As you know, I was in Europe in April at the same time that Tshombe was in London. When I suggested to the Department that it might be a good idea for me to meet with Tshombe for the purpose of renewing our contact and ascertaining his views, the Department expressed its opposition to such a meeting. So I did not see him.

This morning I learned from a British source that Tshombe had wanted to visit the United States after Britain, but that

Copy of letter addressed to: [redacted]
[redacted] was a confidential

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The President
July 7, 1964
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when Lord Russell of Liverpool broached the matter of a visa in a confidential conversation with Ambassador Bruce, he was told that it would be pointless to make application because it could only result in embarrassment to everyone.

Tshombe is not a bitter man. He forgives easily. Despite his experiences, he is still basically pro-American. But if the Department of State persists in its blindly anti-Tshombe attitude, and if Tshombe comes to power despite them, who could blame him if he turned anti-American and if he took measures to eliminate existing American influence from the Congo and replace it with French or Belgian influence?

I believe this to be a very serious danger, and that is why I am writing so bluntly.

As you know, I have continued to maintain a friendly relationship with Tshombe. [

I consider it imperative that we move immediately to establish friendly official relations with Tshombe and, if you feel that I can be useful in any way, I am completely at your service.]

The whole Congo story, which I know intimately and in detail, is an exceedingly bitter one, and, perhaps, inevitably, human judgments and emotions have become involved in political judgments. But it is essential that the anti-Tshombe element in the State Department be curbed before they do more damage.

President Kennedy had to curb this same anti-Tshombe element on a previous occasion when we were trying to bring Adua and Tshombe together. Unfortunately, their influence re-asserted itself, with the resultant waste of hundreds of millions of dollars, and thousands of lives, and the present incredible chaos in the Congo.

Our attitude over the coming several weeks may well determine whether Tshombe will be for us or against us, whether there will be a concert of Western policy in the Congo, or whether we will continue to work at cross purposes with our British, French, and Belgian allies there.

Sincerely,

Tom Dodd

THOMAS J. DODD

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Handed by phone
by the George Kennedy.

August 24, 1965

SUMMARY

Authority State 10-5-77, NSC 1-15-79
By sig, Date 10-2-79

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I wish to ask for an early meeting for the purpose of discussing the situation in the Congo because I am convinced that present State Department policy is again leading us in the direction of an African catastrophe, and that all the good that has been accomplished by the more moderate, more rational Congolese policy of the past year will be lost unless there is a prompt alteration of course.

From accounts that have appeared in the press over the past several weeks, I had grown increasingly concerned about the course of events in the Congo. When I discovered, therefore, during my recent European trip, that Tshombe would be in Brussels while I was in Amsterdam, I decided to take advantage of this situation to have a heart to heart talk with him.

How much the Department has conveyed to you about the present situation in the Congo I do not know.

But from my conversations with Tshombe, from conversations with other people in Europe and in this country, and from documents which I have seen, I am convinced that within the coming weeks the Congo will be confronted with a political crisis of the first magnitude.

On the surface, this crisis may appear to be a simple struggle for political power between Tshombe and Kasavubu. But there is much more than this to it.

Backing Kasavubu--because only in this way can they eliminate Tshombe--are all the opportunists and extremist elements in the Congo, and for that matter, in Black Africa.

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The President

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August 24, 1965

Backing him too, are those elements in the African division of the Department of State who have mistakenly believed that we must hitch our cart in Africa to the extremist and ultra-nationalist forces rather than the forces of moderation.

If it were simply a matter of one man--Tshombe--I would not now be writing this letter.

But I am convinced that the Congo cannot survive without the leadership of Tshombe--and it is as clear as ABC that free Africa cannot survive if the Congo goes under.

After Tshombe was appointed Prime Minister in July of 1964, and after I had intervened with you to complain about the negative and laggard attitude of the State Department vis-a-vis the new Congolese Prime Minister, and after I had brought Mr. Struelens together with Mr. McGeorge Bundy, there was a marked change of attitude on the part of the Department.

At least they expressed a willingness to cooperate with Tshombe in attempting to defeat the rebel onslaught.

The establishment of the Congo Task Force under Robinson McIlvaine in the month of August, 1964, led me to hope that the responsible authorities in the Department had forgotten the past and were now willing to accept Tshombe and to work with him.

I was also disposed to hope that Tshombe's success in dealing with an apparently impossible situation and the almost incredible progress that has been registered on all fronts since his return, would encourage the personnel of the Embassy and of the African desk to forget the past and give Tshombe their unequivocal cooperation.

And I thought that they would at least display some gratitude to Tshombe for his complete cooperation in the Stanleyville rescue--an operation about which he had grave doubts and about which he was not consulted in advance. Tshombe laid his head on the block for us by going along with the rescue operation, and, as you know he took a terrific beating from the Afro-Asian extremists because of the Belgian paratroopers. For this, I believe, we owe him something. But this, apparently, is not the attitude of those who are now determining our Congo policy.

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The President

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August 24, 1965

But within the past 3 months a number of events have taken place which suggest to me that those elements in the Department of State whose pathological dislike for Tshombe led them to support the UN's disastrous intervention in Katanga, are again in charge of policy and are again permitting their personal prejudices to get the better of their political judgment.

Last July, I wrote to you expressing my concern over Ambassador Godley, whose loose-tongued derogatory remarks about Prime Minister Tshombe had been reported to me independently by several Americans, one of them a constituent.

With some misgivings, I accepted Mr. Bundy's assurance at the time that Mr. Godley was wholeheartedly committed to collaboration with the Tshombe Government.

Since then, however, I have received additional evidence which persuade me beyond a shadow of a doubt that my original fears were justified, that Godley has not succeeded in overcoming his irrational dislike of Tshombe, and that he might very well welcome Tshombe's downfall as a vindication of the policy which he and other members of the Department so blindly pursued for several years time.

In the month of May I received an eye-witness account from an internationally known European who told me that, at a luncheon in Leopoldville attended by members of the diplomatic corps, Ambassador Godley had spoken in the most disparaging terms about Tshombe's Minister of the Interior and most trusted supporter, Mr. Munungo.

More recently, I have learned that Godley's air attache on two occasions flew Tshombe's political opponent, former Foreign Affairs Minister Bomboko, around the Congo in his attache plane. These things have a way of getting around the Congo, and the interpretation that most Congolese would read into a news item like this is that the United States is now backing Tshombe's opponents. This would be bad enough in itself.

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The President

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August 24, 1965

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There are other straws in the wind.

For example, Tshombe questions whether Kasavubu would have made his recent anti-Tshombe statement to the New York Times without some encouragement from the Embassy. And he points out in this connection that some of the words used by Kasavubu followed, almost word for word, statements that had previously been made by Ambassador Godley to Professor Rene Clemens, of the University of Liege.

Then again there is the fact that businessmen in the Congo whom the Embassy was previously directing to Prime Minister Tshombe, are now being directed to President Kasavubu.

There is the fact that Struelens was invited to deliver a talk before the State Department summer school, and that this invitation has now been cancelled as a result of intervention from higher up.

There are reports, too, of contacts between Tshombe's opponents and the Ghanaian Embassy, of contacts with Adoula, and of contacts with Belgians known to be hostile to Tshombe. It is my understanding for example, that on a recent visit to Belgium, Ambassador Godley stayed with a businessman whom Tshombe considers to be one of his chief enemies.

[] is reported by Professor Clemens to have told him that if Tshombe doesn't play ball, "the Binza boys will take care of his person." 6 (2)

Finally there is the fact that Tshombe has received no significant assistance of any kind since April, that the two last C-130 cargo planes were withdrawn 15 days ago, and that there is apparently no serious plan for military assistance to the Tshombe government, although the rebels still constitute an important threat in certain areas.

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The President

- 5 -

August 24, 1965

In a situation such as exists in the Congo, we cannot possibly get away with playing both sides simultaneously. We have to pick a man who has popular backing and who, in our opinion, is the most qualified to lead the country, and give him our unconditional support.

Had we made it clear several months ago that we were supporting Tshombe, I think that Kasavubu would have hesitated many times before embarking on his present anti-Tshombe course. But now relations between the two men have degenerated to the point where we may have to make a choice.

I hope that a choice can be avoided and that relations between Tshombe and Kasavubu can be patched up. If they cannot, however, I want to make it emphatically clear that I, for one, do not have any confidence in Kasavubu's ability to lead the Congo. Indeed, Ambassador Godley told me in personal conversation, both in the Congo and in Washington, that Kasavubu was a man of no serious ability.

It is my belief that there should have been a changing of the guard at the point where Tshombe became Prime Minister.

It is my conviction that without such a changing of the guard even at this late date the anti-Tshombe crew in the Leopoldville Embassy and at the African Desk will, in their ill-conceived attempt at self-vindication, turn out to be the architects of still another African disaster.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,



THOMAS J. DODD

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United States Senate

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August 30, 1965

SEP 2 1965

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Confidential

Dear Mr. President:

There are some further observations that I would like to make on the Congo situation by way of amplifying my remarks of August 24.

Over the week end, my assistant, David Martin, came up with two apparently conflicting items of information about the State Department's attitude towards Tshombe.

First, he told me that he had heard from what he believes to be a completely reliable source that the responsible officials of the Department are not seeking to undermine Tshombe, as Tshombe believes; that they realize that his leadership is just about irreplaceable; that they are seeking desperately to head off an open rupture between Tshombe and Kasavubu; and that they are apparently seeking for some kind of "government of national union" formula.

On the other hand, he told me that he had participated in a debate on Vietnam last Friday night in the Methodist Church at Pennsylvania and 20th Streets, and that Mr. John W. Piercey, of the State Department's Public Information Office, had made the following statement, verbatim.

"Take the Congo. . . We didn't want Tshombe--but we got him. And there were many political reasons why this was an unfortunate choice for us and for Africa."

Mr. Martin vouches for the absolute accuracy of this quotation, which, he says, he wrote down immediately. It is difficult for me to escape the conclusion that Mr. Piercey's remark was a reflection of remarks he has heard from some of the Africa hands in the Department.

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Authority State 10-5-77; NSC 1-15-79

By isj, NARS, Date 10-1-79

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The President

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August 30, 1965

I was encouraged to hear that the Department, at top level, is not seeking to undermine Tshombe. On the other hand, I am worried by the strange ambivalence of their attitude, of which Mr. Piercley's public statement was another manifestation. And I fear that they have not yet faced up to the fact that a situation has now been created which will probably make it necessary to choose between Kasavubu and Tshombe.

In the concluding paragraphs of my letter of August 24, I expressed the hope that it would prove possible to hang on to both Tshombe and Kasavubu. But I also warned that it might prove necessary to choose between the two men.

Tshombe made the point at our breakfast in Brussels that it was not he who had declared hostilities on Kasavubu, but Kasavubu who had initiated hostilities against him. He referred in particular to an interview with Kasavubu which appeared in the New York Times for July 19. (Copy attached).

In this interview, the President came out flatly against a party government headed by Tshombe, and instead insisted on a "government of national union." When asked about the possibility of changing the constitution so that the Premier would be less dependent on the President for his tenure of office, Kasavubu replied: "When I refused to change the Constitution of Mr. Adoula, the foreigners said: 'Adoula is for unity. How can you replace him with a secessionist like Tshombe?' Now they want me to change it for Tshombe."

President Kasavubu said further that Tshombe's mandate would end before the new parliament meets. It was possible, he said, that Mr. Tshombe might lead the next Government--but it could not be a Conaco government.

For some time now Tshombe has been chafing over the restraints imposed on his powers as Prime Minister by the Congo's strange semi-presidential, semi-parliamentary regime. He told me, for example that a vital decree establishing regulations for the investment of foreign capital has been on Kasavubu's desk for months now, awaiting his signature. Kasavubu's open attack on him in the New York Times article has convinced him that Kasavubu plans to get rid of him; and, like any political leader who is convinced of the rightness of his cause, he is determined to fight back.

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The President

-3-

August 30, 1965

He is convinced that, if he does submit his resignation as Kasavubu has requested, Kasavubu will not reappoint him or else will reappoint him and completely surround him by hostile ministers. In addition, he holds that the demand for his resignation is unconstitutional.

Kasavubu argues that it was Tshombe's duty, as transitional Prime Minister, simply to conduct the elections for the Legislative Assembly, and then, having fulfilled this function, to submit his resignation before Parliament convened.

Tshombe argues, on the other hand, that it is his duty to govern until the entire process of election has been completed, and that he is, therefore, not called upon to resign until, as required by the constitution, the new President is elected by the combined votes of the members of the new Parliament, the members of the new provincial assemblies, as well as the delegation of the city of Leopoldville. Tshombe includes the election of the new president in "the ensemble of successive operations necessary to effect a renewal of mandate." And he holds that he is not supposed to resign until the President-elect has taken the oath of office, in accordance with Article 56 of the Constitution.

I have read the relevant paragraphs of the constitution, and I honestly feel that the language can be construed either way. Rather than attempting to base our position on a firm interpretation of a highly infirm constitution, I believe that, as matters have now developed, we will simply have to decide whether it is in our interest and the interest of the Congo to back Tshombe or Kasavubu on the issue of interpretation.

One thing is certain: Tshombe will not submit his resignation as requested by Kasavubu. If Kasavubu persists in his attitude, he will be left with no alternative but to seek to dismiss Tshombe as Prime Minister. This will automatically bring on the showdown which, I understand, we are trying to avoid.

I think it is also a fair assumption that, in view of the difficulty of amending the Constitution, Tshombe now plans to run for President against Kasavubu. He does not consider it possible to continue to function under a constitution which enables the President to hold up indefinitely on laws and decrees which are essential to the proper government of the country; to appoint Cabinet Ministers--as Kasavubu has done twice in the past--without consulting the Prime Minister; and to dismiss his Prime Minister arbitrarily whenever he is so disposed and no matter what parliamentary majority the Prime Minister may command.

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The President

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August 30, 1965

Short of persuading Kasavubu to agree to amending the constitution (which in the light of Kasavubu's attitude, appears to be impossible), I see no practical way of preventing a collision between Tshombe and Kasavubu in the forthcoming Presidential elections. In such a situation, Tshombe would not expect our support. But he at least hopes that he can count on our genuine neutrality.

With every best wish.

Sincerely,



THOMAS J. DODD

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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

September 8, 1965

Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Special Assistant to
the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Author: State 10-5-77 NSC 1-15-79
By if 10-2-79

Dear Mr. Bundy:

I want you to see this copy of the letter I sent to the President today.

The contents may appear to be at some variance with our telephone conversation of the other day. I have not changed my mind. I realize that under the present circumstances it may be necessary to have Ambassador Godley remain, at least for a period of time; but I also hope that we can find a way to make a change after a decent interval has elapsed.

If Lew Hoffacker, who was the American consul in Elizabethville, were assigned to the Leopoldville Embassy as a political officer, I think it would help to reduce the tension and to reassure Tshombe.

I hope you will not think it presumptuous of me to make these observations.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,


THOMAS J. DODD

Enclosure

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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

October 27, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Re: Situation in the Congo

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

It had been my hope, as you know, that the Department of State, through our representatives in the Congo, would take certain measures to prevent the recent rupture between Tshombe and President Kasavubu and that, if a showdown between the two men could not be avoided, that the Department would not hesitate to give the necessary backing to Tshombe, who is by common consent the one Congolese leader since independence who has demonstrated any ability to govern.

I have received the impression from conversations with members of the State Department and from other sources that the Department was worried over the prospect of losing Tshombe as Prime Minister, but that they considered it their duty to maintain a rigid hands-off attitude.

If the Department had always abstained from using its influence to promote the candidacy of political leaders in countries in which we are interested, it would be possible to explain their failure to support Tshombe in the recent Congo crisis on the simple basis of consistency. But I know for a fact that the Department pulled out all the stops in supporting Adoula, from the time he first became a candidate for the position of premier until his final dismissal by President Kasavubu.

I believe this lack of positive support for Tshombe, rather than being the product of a general State Department policy, was the product of a deep seated residual hostility toward Tshombe on the part of Ambassador Godley and of certain key people at the Africa desk. Since I have dealt with this matter in detail in previous communications, I shall not belabor the point here.

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The President

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October 27, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Even Tshombe's worst enemies must concede that in his brief period in office he performed a series of near miracles. When he took over in July of last year, the country was spiralling rapidly downward toward total economic and political chaos and a take-over by the pro-communist rebels. Within little more than a year, Tshombe had succeeded in driving the rebels from all major centers, in restoring law and order through most of the country, in creating a tolerably efficient administration, and in restoring the confidence of the 15,000 to 20,000 Belgian experts and technicians who really hold the fabric of the Congolese economy together.

I know that the State Department was worried that if Tshombe went, many of the white mercenaries would quit and the rebels would inevitably recover much of the ground they have lost. This danger is still a very real one, although it is to be hoped that Kimba will know how to retain the services of the mercenaries.

But there are other things that were predictable.

It was predictable, for example, that any incoming government would move to destroy Tshombe's influence by dismissing the many capable Belgians whom he had recruited as advisers in various fields.

This is precisely what has happened.

It is my understanding that the new government, as one of its first acts, gave some twenty of Tshombe's advisers notice to leave the country within twenty-four hours.

This is a development which certainly does not augur well for the future efficiency and stability of the Congolese administration.

It was also clearly predictable that any anti-Tshombe government appointed by President Kasavubu would seek to enlist all the support it could against Tshombe from the communists and the far leftists, both inside the Congo and in the African community of nations.

This, too, is coming to pass.

And in inviting the support of all the pro-communist and extremist elements, Kasavubu will, whether he intends it this way or not, be inviting their influence in his government.

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The President

-3-

October 27, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

It is clear from any reading of the African press and radio that Kwame Nkrumah and all the other pro-communists in Africa were jubilant over the downfall of Tshombe, whom they look upon as their arch enemy.

By way of indicating their approval, they are falling over themselves in their anxiety to be nice to Kasavubu and to his new Foreign Minister, Kamitatu, with whom they have many ancient contacts.

Moreover, I have heard on reliable authority that Kwame Nkrumah and the pro-communist apparatus in Africa invested substantial sums in the Congo for the purpose of undermining Tshombe and enabling Kasavubu to oust him.

Specifically I have heard that it was through the liberal distribution of pro-communist money that several Conaco members of the Senate were bought over, so that Tshombe was deprived of his majority there.

I do not at this moment have documentary proof that Nkrumah and other communist elements have been pouring money into the Congo in recent months.

But, as you no doubt know, there is documentary proof that Nkrumah contributed heavily to Lumumba; and there is also documentary proof that the Soviets were spending large sums of money to abet and purchase support for the rebel insurrection.

I recall, too, that when I was in the Congo I was told by our intelligence that Gbenye was receiving large sums of money on a continuing basis from certain sources.

In the light of this background of communist financial politics in the Congo, I find it difficult to believe that much the same sort of thing is not going on at the present time.

If there could be a free and equal election between Tshombe and Kasavubu this coming February, there would be no doubt in my mind about the outcome.

But to be very frank I have little hope of a free election, unless we use our utmost influence to assure that it takes place.

It is not merely that Tshombe is without political funds and that the government has now blocked his personal bank account in Leopoldville.

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The President

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October 27, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

I think it can be taken for granted that over the coming months those opposed to Tshombe will dispose of virtually unlimited funds from communist and leftist sources.

Indeed, I do not exclude the possibility that either [redacted] or the communists may attempt to liquidate Tshombe.

I am not pro-Tshombe because I like the man.

I am pro-Tshombe because I believe that it is in our national interest to keep the Congo a viable and independent state and to deny it to the communists, and because I am convinced that Tshombe is the only political leader on the Congolese horizon who is capable of doing this job.

I hope that the situation in the Congo can be salvaged. But there is a serious danger that it will not be salvaged unless we take certain affirmative measures.

First of all, I believe that we should use all of our influence to assure free presidential elections in the month of February.

Second, I believe we should do everything in our power to prevent or at least seriously restrict the flow of communist and African extremist money into the Congo.

Third, I think we should display a far more affirmative attitude toward Tshombe than we have heretofore done.

Fourth, certain discreet measures should be taken to protect Tshombe's person.

Fifth, and perhaps most important, I still believe, as I have stated previously, that, to clear the way for an affirmative Congo policy, we must first of all clean house of all those elements, both in the Embassy and in the African desk, whose monumental bad judgment almost succeeded in destroying the Congo, and who, like most human beings, are still emotionally involved with their errors and disposed to welcome any development which might be construed as vindicating their bad judgment.

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The President

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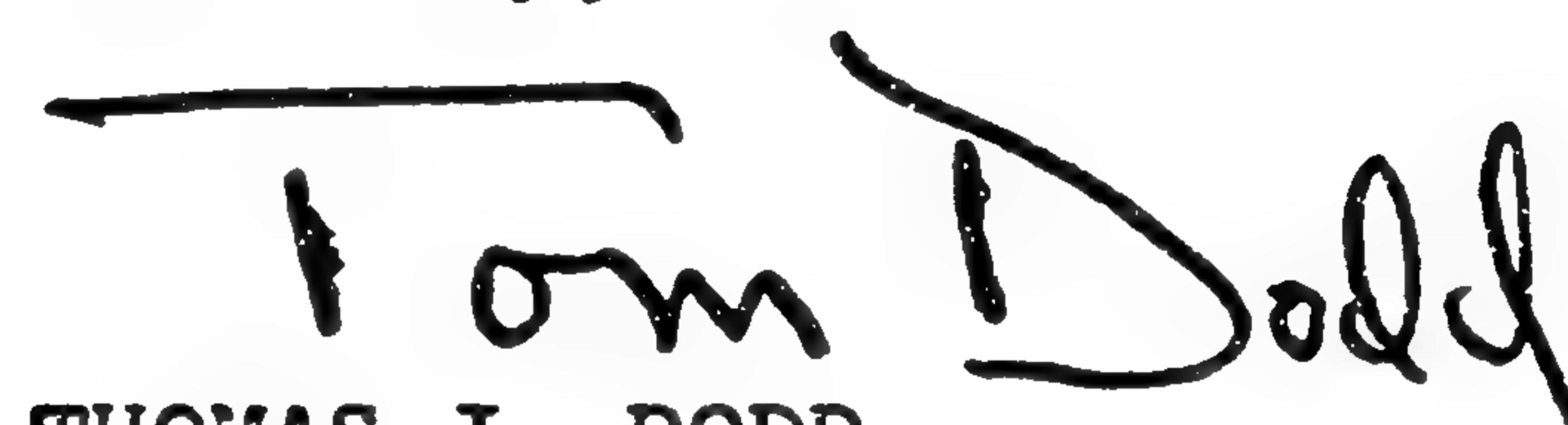
October 27, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

I hope I am not imposing too much on your convalescence, and I also hope that we will see you back here, as hale and hearty as ever, before many weeks have passed.

With every best wish,

Sincerely,


THOMAS J. DODD

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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

November 15, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~NOV 18 1965~~

Re: The Congo Situation

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 10-5-77; NSC 1-15-79
By inf 10-2-79

In previous letters to you concerning the Congo situation I have expressed grave concern over the attitude of Ambassador Godley and members of the African desk.

Because of their personal involvement in the blindly anti-Tshombe policy of 1961 and 1962 they had to be prodded to support Tshombe when he first came to power as Prime Minister of the Congo.

From many evidences which came to me and which I reported to you, I am convinced that they were somewhat less than half-hearted in their support, even when Tshombe, by common consent, was saving the Congo from chaos and a communist take-over.

More recently, according to reliable information, they have been cooperating with Tshombe's political enemies in an effort to unseat him.

Although I am loathe to intrude on your convalescence, I again take the liberty of writing to you because of the ominous developments since Tshombe's dismissal by President Kasavubu on October 13.

This morning's press carried the news that the Congolese Parliament had, by a tally of 134 to 121, voted no confidence in Prime Minister Kimba, whom Kasavubu had appointed to form a new government when he dismissed Tshombe.

The press also mentioned the fact that Kasavubu had waited until late Saturday evening to announce over the radio that Parliament would convene Sunday morning for the purpose of voting approval of the Kimba government. The press said that this was clearly an effort to catch Tshombe off guard.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The President

-2-

November 15, 1965

Under the circumstances, the fact that Tshombe was able to win constitutes an exceptional proof of the solidity of his political following.

But there are many things that have been happening in the Congo that have not been reported by the press.

For example, on November 5, 1965 the Congolese Parliament, by a vote of 90 to 40, adopted a motion denouncing Kasavubu's dismissal of Tshombe as unconstitutional and strongly supporting Tshombe. Not a word of this, to my knowledge, appeared in a single American newspaper.

A few weeks ago Presence Congolaise, a major Leopoldville paper, which has been considered independent but which criticized the dismissal of Tshombe, was closed down by order of President Kasavubu. In addition, two other publications, Renaissance and Flash, were closed down. The Congolese Assembly protested against these measures. But again not a word appeared in our press about these events.

Meanwhile, there has been the evidence of increasing contacts between the Kasavubu government and the pro-Chinese communist government of Brazzaville, as well as with Nkrumah and the other extremist African leaders.

Instead of attempting to build a strong bloc of moderate African states, as Tshombe sought to do, Kasavubu, now that he is committed to an anti-Tshombe course, seems to be seeking support from and unity with all the African extremists.

Internally, the situation gives further reason for apprehension because of the evidence that Interior Minister Nendaka has been building support for himself by mobilizing all the old left-wing Lumumbist and all the discredited opportunistic elements.

My information is that Tshombe's political popularity is greater than ever, both in Parliament and among the people. After the defeat of the Kimba government on Sunday, for example, Tshombe was cheered wildly by the people of Leopoldville as he drove through the streets in an open car.

I believe that if we remain truly neutral in the Congolese political situation, Tshombe's election as President is foreordained because of the remarkable strength

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The President

-3-

November 15, 1965

he has shown in Parliament, which, under the Congolese constitution, would elect the President directly next February.

I also believe that Tshombe as President would assure us of five years of stability and orderly administration in the Congo, with all that this means for the security of Africa.

Under these circumstances I consider it most regrettable that the Embassy and the African desk apparently consider it their duty to support Kasavubu or to work for the impossible and outdated concept of a national union government. Their entire attitude is a formula for disaster.

I do not know what politicians or combination of politicians the State Department now has in mind for the leadership of the Congo. But I do know, based on the entire Congolese experience of the past five years, that the Congolese political leaders are almost uniformly inept and that Tshombe is the only one who has the intelligence and administrative ability and energy and charismatic qualities necessary to run the country efficiently.

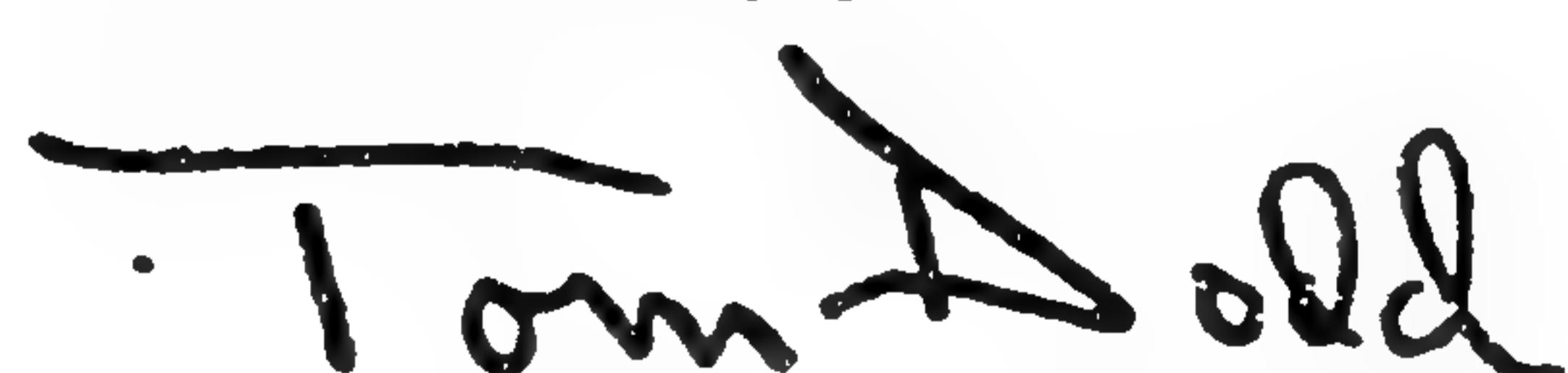
I also know that many businessmen, American as well as Belgian, are taking the stand that they intend to invest no further money in the Congo if Tshombe does not return to office.

I consider it my duty to advise you of these things because the press is showing an increasing interest in the situation and because I fear that, if the Congo continues to flounder in chronic political crisis, the situation will inevitably result in public criticism that will spill over onto the floor of Congress.

I hope you are finding some time for rest and recreation, despite the many demands that the world situation and Congressional correspondents are placing on you.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,



THOMAS J. DODD

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November 16, 1965

CONGRESSIONAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Tom: *T. Dodd*

I was glad to have your letter of November 15 with regard to our problems in the Congo.

I am concerned that you believe Ambassador Godley, G. M. T. I. C. and the African Bureau of the State Department have been working with the political enemies of Tshombe. I am assured that this is not the case.

There is no doubt that Tshombe is an effective political leader and that he has strong support in the Congo. At the same time, we must recognize that President Kasavubu also has a substantial following.

We have tried not to take sides in internal Congolese politics but to do whatever we could to assure the establishment and maintenance of a stable, anti-Communist government. Our Embassy in Leopoldville worked closely with Tshombe while he, as Prime Minister, was engaged in cleaning up the rebellion and it has continued to work closely with him since that time.

We have, however, been disturbed by the cooling of relations between Tshombe and Kasavubu since a developing antagonism between these two strong political leaders could lead only to disunity. Together with Foreign Minister Spaak we have tried to encourage the closest working relations between Tshombe and Kasavubu.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority file 10-5-77 + nsc 1-15-79
By aj, NARS, Date 9-19-79

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Since Tebzonbe's dismissal from office on October 13 our Embassy has been under instructions to pursue a strictly neutral course. Our efforts have been limited to urging all contenders to work toward a stable central government by legal and open means. The fact that Tebzonbe's parliamentary majority was able to defeat the Klimbe Government would indicate that so far constitutional processes have been functioning effectively.

Amaba ssadot Godley has informed us that he has kept in close contact with Tshombe during this period of political tension. You will be interested to know that Godley was one of the first people Tshombe called upon after the failure of the Kasaï Government on November 15.

I greatly welcome your active interest in the Congo and the rich resources of information that you can bring to bear. Your advice is welcomed at all times and given great consideration.

Since I feel that the matters you raise should be fully considered to make sure no essential point has been missed, I have asked Governor Williams to visit you at your earliest convenience.

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Honorable Thomas J. Dodd
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

November 16, 1965

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Auth. State 10-5-77, NSC 1-15-79
By sig, date 9-19-79

Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Bundy:

I enclose for your confidential information a copy of the letter I have today sent to the President concerning the situation in the Congo.

Somewhat over a year ago you consented to see Mr. Michel Struelens at my urging, and I have the impression that the meeting turned out to be a very fruitful one. I would like to again suggest the advisability of your meeting with Mr. Struelens, despite the fact that he no longer has any official diplomatic status. While Mr. Struelens may be considered biased in favor of Tshombe, I do believe that he can provide you with information that will help to balance and round out the estimates of the Congo situation which you have been receiving from State Department sources.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,

Tom Dodd

THOMAS J. DODD

NOV 22 1965

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COMMITTEES:
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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, D.C.

November 24, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DEC 3 1965

Auth. 10-5-77; NSC 1-15-79
By sig 10-2-79

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I want to thank you for your answer to my letter of November 15 on the Congo situation.

I don't want to exhaust your patience. But I am writing again about the Congo because I believe that a catastrophe is imminent unless we act immediately. And all I can do is report to you the facts as I know them.

I know that in any such situation a President must consult with his own advisors and experts. However, I believe it is a matter of record that our State Department experts were dead wrong in the advice they gave President Kennedy on the Congo in 1961 and 1962. And I am convinced that these same experts are just as wrong in some of the information and advice they are giving you today.

I assume your letter was based on advice received from the State Department. Among other things, it made the point that "The fact that Tshombe's parliamentary majority was able to defeat the Kimba Government would indicate that so far constitutional processes have been functioning effectively."

This statement is not borne out by the facts as I know them.

As you no doubt know, the New York Times this last Saturday, November 20, reported from Leopoldville that many of the deputies who have voted against Kimba had been summarily expelled from their hotels by order of Interior Minister Nendaka; that the premises of two anti-Kasavubu newspapers had been ransacked without police intervention; and that Tshombe and other opposition leaders had publicly stated that their lives had been threatened.

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In addition, I am informed by a source in which I have complete confidence that over the past few days Kasavubu and Nendaka have discussed arresting Tshombe and other repressive measures designed to prevent an opposition victory.

Finally, I think I should inform you that Tshombe has written a letter to friends in which he has expressed serious concern over the intentions of Kasavubu and Nendaka towards his person.

There is always a possibility that my information may be wrong. But I would, in any case urge you to have it checked out, not with the African desk, whose record for accuracy and judgment has been so sadly compromised, but with the CIA and other elements of our intelligence community.

I am convinced that the arrest or assassination of Tshombe would be an irreparable calamity for the Congo because there simply is no other Congolese personality on the horizon who could take control of the situation.

In addition, I am absolutely certain that the arrest or assassination of Tshombe would result in the immediate defection of the great majority of the mercenaries who have been holding the line against the rebel insurrection, as well as of the Belgian technicians who have been holding the line against economic chaos. With their departure from the Congo, the way would be open for the rebels to reoccupy the major centers from which they were driven during the rule of the Tshombe Government.

I know that the State Department, at the height of the Congolese rebellion, brought great pressure to bear on Tshombe to enter into a government of national union, extending as far to the left as Thomas Kanza, the rebel foreign minister, for whom certain personalities in the African Division of the Department of State entertained an inexplicable admiration.

I hope that the Department will be prepared to exercise at least as much pressure on the Kasavubu government to prevent its further recourse to illegal and unconstitutional measures against the opposition and to warn it that the murder or arrest of Tshombe would create a crisis of the most serious dimensions in Congolese-American relations.

Again, I wish to express the hope that you will be able to act on this letter immediately on receiving it, because I honestly believe that this is a situation in which there is at the best several weeks and at the worst no more than several days in which to make our influence felt.

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With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Tom Dodd

THOMAS J. DODD

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